

## Town May Have to Fund Chestnut St. Intersection Fix

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

The intersection at Chestnut St., Tobey Garden and Route 3A is busy and dangerous, but it is not the town's worst and it is not on the state's list to fix. It appears that if Duxbury wants to do something about it, the only way is for the town to pay for it itself.

At their meeting Monday night, selectmen were presented with a petition bearing 1,300 signatures of Duxbury residents who want a traffic light at this intersection, known as Bailey's Corner. The meeting was attended by the town's Highway Safety Committee and an engineer with the Mass. Highway Department as well as a roomful of concerned citizens.

Lou Tretakoff of Massasoit Rd. collected the signatures in two and half weeks, he said. He wanted selectmen to vote to ask the state to rework the intersection, which has traffic back-ups and is the scene of many accidents. Tretakoff said the 2003 data he received shows that 14,188 cars pass through the intersection daily. He's witnessed a 17-car back-up and four accidents there recently, he said.

"It's time that the town recognize it's not 1950 or 1960 anymore. It's now, and the town has a huge traffic problem at that corner," said Tretakoff.

Joe Shea of the Highway Safety Committee said the intersection is the town's fourth busiest and is not the most dangerous. The roundabout at Lincoln and Congress St. is the busiest and the intersection at Winter St. and Route 53 is the most dangerous. The intersection at Route 139 and Route 3A is also more dangerous than Chestnut St. There have been 19 crashes and one fatal accident at the Winter St. intersection, said Shea. At Route 139/3A there have been 11 crashes and no fatal accidents and at Chestnut St., there have been nine crashes and no fatal accidents, said Shea.

It is the Highway Safety Committee's position to take care of these other intersections before working on Chestnut St., said Shea. The committee takes into consideration traffic volume and accidents at each intersection. Currently, the state is redesigning the Winter St. intersection, but has not funded its reconstruction.

"It's not that we don't think it's an issue," said committee member Jeff Lewis. "It's just a matter of priorities."

The Chestnut St. intersection is not on the state's list of 1,000 most dangerous intersections, said Bob Gregory, a traffic engineer who has worked for Mass Highway for 36

years.

Selectman Andre Martecchini asked Gregory if the intersection could be reworked before the state begins its repaving of Route 3A next year. Gregory answered that it would be possible, but that the intersection needs to be studied to determine the best solution for it. A traffic light may not be the answer, he said.

To install a traffic light at the Chestnut St. intersection, it has to first be determined that there is enough traffic flowing through there to warrant it, said Gregory. Counts must be taken for a few days to determine the average volume of traffic during certain times of the day. Also, Gregory said, a traffic light may not be the best solution for the area as lights don't decrease accidents, he said.

They often cause more accidents, such as rear-enders.

Reconstructing the intersection would mean fixing the alignment of the roads and could involve widening certain areas, which would mean land-takings, said Gregory. A design needs to be funded first.

Gregory estimated that redesigning the intersection could cost between \$40,000 to \$50,000. Reconstructing it could cost between \$250,000 to \$350,000. Because it is not a state priority, there is no money to fund this project, said Gregory.

"We have a tremendous burden to make sure the money we have is well spent," said Gregory. "We can't get to the 1,000 that we have. We're faced with choosing as wisely as we can."

"Realistically, if we're going to do it, we're going to have to pay for it," said Martecchini.

He recommended that an article be brought to the annual town meeting or a special town meeting to fund a "function design report," which would cost \$5,000 to \$7,000. This will give some numbers on how much it will cost the town to fix the intersection.

Gregory said that state would allow the town to fund the intersection reconstruction itself.

Shea said that no one on the Highway Safety Committee wanted to change its list of priority intersections. "We're rock solid," Shea said.

In other business, selectmen:

- Approved an all alcohol

license for the Wildflower Café on Chestnut St. The town can issue up to 14 all-alcohol licenses and it currently has given out six.

- Learned that the Percy Walker pool needs an aquatic supervisor as soon as possible or it may have to reduce its hours. Town Manager Rocco Longo said one of the pool's three aquatic supervisors is leaving March 29 and that may impact hours the pool can be open, depending upon how soon the position is filled.

- Learned that Water Superintendent Carl Hillstrom will be retiring this year. Longo said a transition team made up of a retired DPW director who is a town resident will run the department until a replacement can be found.